

# THE FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS ART INTO CHINESE HIGHER ART EDUCATION

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## 1. Introduction

In today's era of globalization, indigenous art has become an important part of cultural heritage. Indigenous art embodies diverse histories, beliefs and values and provides a unique perspective on identity and ecology. In China, the art education system has traditionally emphasized classical Chinese aesthetics; however, integrating indigenous art resources is an opportunity to enrich the curriculum and promote cross-cultural dialogue. This study explores the mechanisms of integrating indigenous art resources into the Chinese art education system from a cross-cultural perspective, as well as shedding light on the potential and challenges of such integration, while proposing practical strategies to build a culturally respectful interdisciplinary curriculum that supports both heritage preservation and innovative art pedagogy. The study utilized a mixed methods approach. First, a comprehensive literature review of international case studies and theoretical frameworks related to indigenous arts, cultural heritage, and arts education was conducted. In addition, a qualitative analysis of actual cases (including field projects, exhibitions, and curriculum experiments at home and abroad) provided empirical insights. Data is drawn from academic publications, institutional reports, and interviews with educators and cultural custodians. Findings suggest that indigenous art is culturally important by conveying identity symbol systems and ecological wisdom. Practical examples show that indigenous art not only enriches aesthetic content, but also promotes localized learning, ethical reflection, and community empowerment. However, challenges such as cultural appropriation, curricular adaptation, and the balance between traditional inheritance and modern innovation must be addressed. Based on interdisciplinary integration and ethical collaboration, a theoretical framework was developed to guide future curriculum design. Integrating indigenous art into Chinese higher art education has the potential to foster cultural

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confidence, broaden artistic horizons, and support sustainable social development. However, successful implementation requires harmonizing traditional practices with modern educational needs while ensuring respect for cultural representation. Educators and policy makers should collaborate to revise curriculum standards and assessment criteria to ensure that indigenous arts are presented in a way that honors their cultural significance. Future research should further explore community-based educational models and digital preservation methods to support the dynamic transmission of native arts.

## 2. Cultural value and educational significance of indigenous art

As an important carrier of the diversity of human civilization indigenous art not only carries the historical memory and spiritual beliefs of ethnic groups but also shows unique cultural value and educational significance in the process of globalization and modernization.

### 2.1. Cultural value: inheritance of identity and ecological wisdom

*Symbolic System of Identity:* Indigenous art constructs the cultural identity of ethnic groups through visual symbols (such as clothing patterns, totem patterns), ritual performances (such as singing and dancing, sacrifices) and material carriers (such as pottery and weavings). For example, the pearl clothes of the Atayal people in Taiwan use red and white, and red and black diamond patterns to symbolize the gender identity and religious function of the ethnic group. Its pattern system is both an aesthetic expression and a metaphor for social relations. The clan symbols in Australian Aboriginal art record the migration paths of ancestors through rock paintings and ground paintings, forming a sacred narrative of the "Creation Era" and strengthening the ethnic group's sense of belonging to the land and history (Figure 1). This kind of artistic practice not only transmits collective memory, but also maintains cultural continuity through intergenerational inheritance, becoming a spiritual fortress against colonial assimilation.

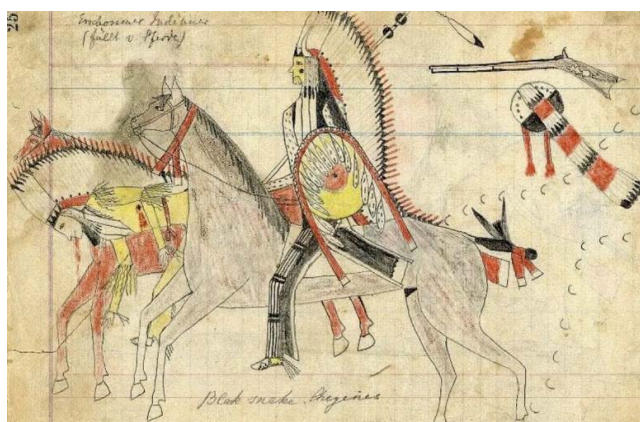


Figure 1. Ledger watercolor on paper, "Soldiers Rushing to the Powder River", circa 1877, by Black Horse (Cheyenne warrior artist).

*The concrete expression of ecological wisdom:* The symbiotic relationship between indigenous art and the natural environment embodies a profound ecological philosophy. For example, as shown in Figure 1 through the concept of "learning spirits", the indigenous inhabitants of North America emphasize that the interaction between people and the land must follow the laws of nature, and artistic creation must be integrated with the awe of the ecosystem. As shown in Figure 2, the Mang Gu drum dance of the Hani people in Yunnan simulates the rhythm of nature with body movements and conveys the wisdom of farming and ecological balance through dance movements, becoming a model of living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. This art form is not only an aesthetic activity, but also a practical way of teaching people about ecological ethics.



*Figure 2. The Mang Gu drum dance records the trajectory of the development and evolution of the social and historical customs of the Hani nationality (source: Chinese network, author anonymous, time unknown).*

*The media function of cross-cultural dialogue:* In the context of globalization, indigenous art has gradually developed from "local knowledge" to a bridge for cross-cultural dialogue. For example, the acrylic paintings of the Indigenous peoples in the Western Desert of Australia have been redefined as "high art" through the curation and academic interpretation of the international art world, and their symbolic system has been interpreted as a reflection on colonial history and a critique of modernity [1].

## **2.2. Educational significance: localized education and ethical reflection**

- *Embodied learning and holistic education:* Indigenous education emphasizes "learning by doing" and cultivates body perception and creativity through artis-

tic practice. For example, the embroidery and mouth harp playing of the Ainu people not only impart skills but also awaken learners' identification with cultural genes through hand movements and musical rhythms. The indigenous art course design of Donghua University in Taiwan combines digital technology to transform traditional crafts into interactive teaching materials, allowing students to understand the intangible characteristics of ethnic culture in practice as for burial practice in Figure 3. This educational model breaks through the limitations of Western "storage-style education" and advocates holistic learning that integrates body and mind.



Figure 3. *The Funeral of the Great Hunter Ancestor Gurrmirringu* (Mortuary rites for Gurrmirringu the great ancestral hunter), David Malangi, around 1969.

- *Intangible cultural heritage protection and ethical education*: The inheritance of indigenous art faces the dual challenges of cultural heritage protection and ethical controversy. For example, indigenous cultural relics exhibited in museums often lose their sacred meaning due to "decontextualization", triggering discussions about the repatriation of cultural relics. Yunnan University's research on the aesthetics of intangible cultural heritage proposes three dimensions which are digitization, branding, and life-orientation. By transforming Sani embroidery into modern consumer products, it not only protects traditional crafts but also promotes sustainable economic development. Such practices require educators to guide students to reflect on colonial history and power relations and cultivate an ethical awareness of cultural respect.
- *Contemporary reconstruction of local aesthetics*: The book "Local Aesthetics: Indigenous art, Media and Identity" proposes two ways of viewing: "originality" and "reflexivity", emphasizing that the authenticity of indigenous art must be achieved through the dual perspectives of local context and cross-cultural dialogue. For example, the Ainu song and dance performances in Shanghai must avoid being misinterpreted as "Japanese culture" and must also use the global platform to convey their subjectivity in resisting colonialism. This kind of educational practice requires redefining the boundaries between "art" and "handicrafts" and highlighting the agency and politics of indigenous art.

### 3. Practical cases of indigenous art and art education

As the core carrier of cultural heritage and identity recognition, indigenous art has presented diverse innovative models in its educational practice around the world.

Through in-depth analysis of typical cases at home and abroad, we demonstrate the diverse applications of indigenous art in educational practice and discuss its practical significance and promotion value in aesthetic education. At present, educational institutions around the world are gradually recognizing the important complementary role of multiculturalism in art education, and indigenous art, with its unique cultural connotation and ecological wisdom, is becoming an important carrier of cross-cultural communication and aesthetic education innovation.

#### 3.1. Contemporary transformation of traditional skills

##### 3.1.1. Integration of Australian indigenous dot painting and education

Australian indigenous art is famous for "dot painting", the origin of which can be traced back to the artist group of the Papunya community in the 1970s. Contemporary artists such as Emily Kame Kngwarreye use dot painting techniques to transform "dream stories" into modern art language. As shown in Figure 3, the work uses abstract symbols to convey the connection between land and ancestors. The touring exhibition "The Stars We Cannot See" curated by the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) combines new media with bark painting to show the diversity of indigenous art to global audiences [2]. In the field of education, the American Indian Arts Institute (IAIA) incorporates traditional symbols into digital art courses. For example, Professor Anthony Dieter uses a spherical screen to present the philosophy of the Aboriginal "circular narrative", challenging Hollywood's linear narrative hegemony. In the transfor-



mation of contemporary traditional techniques, the Australian Aboriginal art form - "pointillism" - has been recreated by contemporary artists to form a new visual language that retains the original symbolism while incorporating modern aesthetics. Through exhibitions, digital archiving and cross-border collaborations, this art has not only gained recognition in the international art market but has also breathed new life into the art curriculum at the university. For example, a well-known art college introduced pointillism into its design curriculum, allowing students to experience the emotions of the land and the spirit of the tribe through hands-on teaching, thereby broadening their artistic horizons and creative thinking.

### *3.1.2. Totem poles and community education of North American indigenous peoples*

As shown in Figure 4, Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest of North America record clan history by carving totem poles. For example, Tlingit artist Preston Singletary combines glass sculptures with traditional creation myths. His work "Crow and Sunlight Box" reconstructs oral traditions through multi-sensory experience [3]. Canada's "Indigenous Culture and Decolonization" department promotes cooperation between museums and communities, combining the return of cultural relics with the revitalization of indigenous languages, such as Joi T. Arcand writing the word "Welcome" in Cree (the term refers to the Cree people and their culture and language in Canada) on the ground, forcing the public to face the endangered status of the language [4].

Native Americans in North America have a long heritage of totem poles and carving techniques that record tribal history and natural beliefs through a unique system of symbols. These totems are not only an artistic expression, but also a vehicle for cultural narrative and identity. In the northwestern United States, a museum and a local tribe have joined hands to carry out the "Totem Revival" program, which combines traditional skills with modern education through fieldwork, workshops and lectures, so that students can not only feel the power of traditional culture but also learn about the importance of cultural inheritance in modern society. In addition, in response to the challenges of cultural inheritance in the digital age, some institutions have used virtual reality technology to restore historical scenes and provide students with an immersive learning experience, thereby stimulating their interest in traditional culture and their spirit of inquiry.

### *3.1.3. African masks and ritual education*

African indigenous art centers on masks, which are used in coming-of-age rituals and community ceremonies. Ghana's Kente cloth conveys identity information through its weaving patterns, using materials as its medium, colors as its language, and patterns as its narrative. Woven within its warp and weft, Kente cloth embodies the philosophy, history, and social structure of West Africa. It serves as both an identity marker and a bearer of cultural pride and collective memory among African cultural communities in Ghana and globally. Its educational value lies in the integration of craft inheritance and youth cultural identity [6]. South African artist Nazaréli Chicaméga's "Morras Art" project teaches traditional weaving techniques through community workshops while incorporating gender equality issues [7].



Figure 4. Totem pole carved out of wood from the Northwest Coast, from the 19th century to the present (traditional continuation), they include carved totem animals (e.g. man-eating whales, grizzly bears) and tribal history stories (source: [5]).

### **3.2. From localization to globalization**

#### *3.2.1. Cultural immersion model of the WIPCE conference in Australia*

The 2022 World Indigenous Peoples' Education Conference (WIPCE) was themed "Our Voice, Our Future" and constructs a cross-cultural education scene through didgeridoo<sup>1</sup> performances, smoke rituals and indigenous songs and dances. The conference also introduced indigenous food cooking and art workshops, allowing participants to experience cultural diversity through taste and touch [8].

#### *3.2.2. Community feedback mechanism of the American Indian Arts Institute*

The American Indian Arts Institute (IAIA) emphasizes the concept of "art serving the community". Student Daniel Yazzie Natonabah (Daniel Yazzie Natonabah) Natonabah used photography to record life on the reservation and explore identity reconstruction; Dolores Scarlet Cortez used printmaking as a medium to repair cultural memory that was broken by colonial history [9].

Taking the Institute of American Indian Arts as an example, the Institute promotes intercultural exchanges and interactions by organizing international symposiums, art festivals and online exhibitions that bring together indigenous artworks from all over the world. By displaying the creative process and backstory of this art through multimedia means, it not only allows students to intuitively feel the charm of multiculturalism but also provides them with a platform for interdisciplinary and cross-regional learning. At the same time, these practical cases also provide valuable references for the curriculum reform of colleges and universities, prompting teachers to rethink how to respect the uniqueness of indigenous cultures in teaching and at the same time organically integrate them with modern education concepts, so as to realize the dual goals of knowledge transmission and innovative development.

#### *3.2.3. Rural practice of China Rural Aesthetic Education Alliance*

The China Academy of Art sent students to villages such as Ningde, Fujian through the "real questions and real practice" model, and cooperated with folk artists to transform traditional buildings and activate rural cultural space. The Central Academy of Fine Arts' "Moshang Huakai Aesthetic Education Going to the Countryside Action" trains rural teachers to develop age-specific courses, as shown in Figure 5, such as combining paper cutting and ink painting to teach ecological ethics [10]. It aims to help students gain a deep understanding of the history and techniques of indigenous art through project-based learning. Practical examples have amply demonstrated that the use of indigenous art in education has multiple values. It can be used as a material for artistic expression, providing rich visual resources for the classroom, and can also be an important tool for cultural transmission and social education. In the actual teaching and learning process, institutions can draw on the above case studies and adopt a variety of ways to promote indigenous art, including inviting the artists to give lectures in schools, organizing off-campus practical activities, and using digital platforms for online teaching. This will not only help enhance students' aesthetic ability and sense of innovation but also promote the popularization of cultural diversity and ecological wisdom, providing solid cultural support for building a harmonious society.





Figure 5. "Honghuang Phantom" by Xue Jiahui, a native of Yan 'an, Shaanxi Province, China.

### **3.3. Art as a tool for decolonization**

#### **3.3.1. Political expression of the Sami Pavilion at the Venice Biennale**

In 2024, the Venice Biennale will rename its Nordic Pavilion as the "Sámi Pavilion" and present the works of artist Anders Sunna. Born in 1985 in the Sámi region of Sweden, Anders Sunna is a contemporary Sámi artist whose practice revolves around political critique and familial narratives. His paintings serve not only as concrete examples of his artistic practice but also embody his core creative philosophy: by interweaving personal memories with collective history, they reveal the destruction colonialism has wrought on Sámi land and culture, while acting as visual vehicles for their identity formation and political struggle. The work *Styx in Torn Pieces* criticizes the Swedish government's plunder of Sami land. Sunna collages family photos and mining images to reveal the impact of colonial violence on the livelihoods of the Indigenous peoples [11].

#### **3.3.2. Global narratives of Canadian indigenous art**

Scholar Peng Wenbin pointed out in "Artistic Expression of Canadian Indigenous in an International Perspective" that native Vancouver people reconstruct cultural identity in the context of globalization through art, such as using digital media to integrate traditional symbols into public art installations, thus challenging the Western-centric perspective [12].

#### **3.3.3. Academic curation of Australian indigenous art**

The "Are Stones Listening?" exhibition curated by Stephen Gilchrist, a scholar at the University of Sydney, explores the conflict between indigenous knowledge systems and colonial history through the works of the Carabin Film Group, and proposes "spherical narratives" to confront the linear view of time [13]. These cases reveal to us that in the practice of aesthetic education, indigenous art is not only an aesthetic experience, but also a critical reflection on historical, political and social realities. Through classroom discussions, special lectures and hands-on creation, students are able to understand the language of art while developing the ability to think independently and communicate cross-culturally. The application of indigenous arts in American education is undergoing continuous development and innovation. These arts have, moreover, demonstrated remarkable vitality and educational potential, whether in the modernization of traditional practices or in global intercultural dialogue and decolonization initiatives. Technological advancements and evolving educational philosophies suggest that indigenous arts will play a more significant role in various educational settings in the future, contributing to the cultivation of artists who possess a global perspective and cultural sensitivity.

## **4. Potential and challenges of integrating indigenous art into Chinese art education**

### **4.1. The core value and contemporary significance of indigenous art**

The core value of indigenous art lies in its profound connection with nature, community and culture. Steven Leuthold's "indigenous aesthetics" emphasizes that Indig-

enous art reconstructs the relationship between art and ecology and community identity through dimensions such as “natural imagery”, “local attachment”, and “pulse and essence”. For example, Native Americans transform the sacredness of the land and collective memory into aesthetic practice through documentaries, pottery, weaving and other media, forming an artistic paradigm of “spirituality-nature-community”.

As an important form of self-expression for various cultures and ethnic groups, Indigenous art carries rich history, traditions and values.

This aesthetic value and cultural identity is highly instructive in the context of China's multiculturalism. Introducing indigenous art can not only enrich the content of traditional aesthetic education but also stimulate students to think deeply about cultural diversity and eco-ethics, thus broadening their artistic vision and sense of social responsibility.

## **4.2. The potential of integration into Chinese Art Education**

### **4.2.1. Cultural diversity and the reconstruction of indigenous aesthetics**

Indigenous art can provide diversified aesthetic resources for Chinese art education. For example, the “perceptual experience” constructed by the Australian Indigenous people through clan symbols and natural symbols reveals the symbiotic relationship between art and land, language, and rituals. This art form is not only a visual expression, but also a cultural narrative that conveys the historical memory and ecological wisdom of the ethnic group.

The batik and wood carving crafts of the ethnic minorities in southwest China also contain metaphorical expressions of nature, which can be transformed into interdisciplinary aesthetic education courses to help students understand the deep connection between “sense of place” and “ecological ethics”.

As shown in Figure 6, for example, the relationship between plant dyes in batik and natural rhythms, and the connection between totem symbols in wood carvings and ethnic beliefs can all become important teaching contents in art education. Integrating indigenous art into Chinese art education can not only inject new vitality into the course content but also expand students' artistic horizons and enhance their understanding of multiculturalism.

Chinese art education has long been dominated by traditional technology and modern art, so introducing it into the syllabus can break with this pattern and provide students with a broader cultural perspective. For example, the stories, legends, natural materials and unique techniques found in indigenous art can inspire students to integrate multiple cultural elements into their creations. By being exposed to diverse art forms and cultural connotations around the world, students can better understand the diversity of art and the complexity of culture, thereby cultivating cross-cultural aesthetic skills and critical thinking. Indigenous art is mostly created collectively by the community, breaking the “artist's personal myth.” For example, Western art history has long marginalized non-Western traditions, and indigenous art has promoted decolonization narratives. Aboriginal art proves that digging deep into cultural roots is itself a powerful source of creativity.

Ultimately, this integration will enable students to develop a healthier cultural mindset in the era of globalization: one that values the uniqueness of local traditions and understands that all cultures are “indigenous peoples in the eyes of others”, so that they can find their own artistic language in the collision of multiple cultures with humility and openness.





Figure 6. The Chinese Bai ethnic group's tie-dye is mainly designed with a combination of animal patterns, plant patterns and geometric patterns (source: Chinese Internet, author and time unknown).

#### 4.2.2. Innovative education methodology

An indigenous way of learning emphasizes "embodied learning" and "symbiotic contextual learning". This educational model provides important methodological inspi-



ration for Chinese art education. Indigenous North Americans convey knowledge through physical practices such as dance and weaving, integrating "mind-body-spirit" into a holistic learning process. This way of learning not only focuses on the transmission of knowledge but also emphasizes the learner's physical participation and cultural experience. In Chinese art classrooms, students can experience the creative logic of "art as life" in practice through field surveys, community collaboration projects, etc. For example, organizing students to go to ethnic minority areas and work with local artists to complete art projects can not only improve students' practical ability, but also enhance their understanding and respect for national culture. In China, the traditional arts of many ethnic groups also have a profound cultural heritage. Combining these art forms with indigenous art can provide students with new perspectives and ideas. For example, discussing the views of indigenous art on environmental protection and social justice in class can inspire students to think about broader social issues. First, through field trips, art workshops, and nature observations, learners can personally experience indigenous art practices and are encouraged to collaborate with community members and artists on art projects. Second, indigenous artists and cultural heritage bearers are invited to participate in curriculum design and teaching, collecting and organizing documents, images, and physical materials related to indigenous art to support instruction. At the same time, through events such as art festivals, exhibitions, and seminars, the exchange and integration of indigenous art with local culture are promoted. Finally, in terms of evaluation mechanisms, not only are learners' artistic skills assessed, but also their cultural understanding, ecological awareness, and social responsibility. The social impact and cultural inheritance effects of art practices are measured through the participation and feedback of community members. This cross-cultural dialogue not only helps to promote students' respect and understanding of national culture, but also stimulates their creativity and imagination, allowing them to break through conventions in artistic creation and explore new ways to express themselves.

#### 4.2.3. *Social empowerment and rural revitalization*

The close connection between indigenous art and nature and the community makes it unique in social empowerment and rural revitalization. For example, the Shanghai Moganshan Public Art Project shows that the participatory practice of indigenous art can activate the rural cultural economy while promoting urban-rural dialogue. By combining indigenous art with local intangible cultural heritage, it is possible to achieve the linkage between art and industry and promote the sustainable development of the rural economy.

Ouyang Su's team combined bamboo art creation with local intangible cultural heritage through the "learning-research-production-transmission" cooperation model, which not only protected traditional crafts but also promoted the innovation and development of rural culture. The Yunnan "Eyes of the Village" project encourages indigenous people to take the lead in discourse through video recording; it integrates historical culture and ecological ethics into art or other subjects and cultivates a worldview of multicultural symbiosis. Students can not only learn environmental protection concepts but also experience the role of art in community cohesion and enhance their sense of social responsibility. This educational model not only helps the inheritance and innovation of rural culture but also provides new impetus for rural revitalization.

### **4.3. Facing challenges and ethical dilemmas**

#### *4.3.1. Cultural appropriation and power relations*

The display of indigenous art often falls into the trap of "romanticization" or "museumization". This phenomenon of cultural appropriation should also be vigilant when introducing ethnic minority art in China, because when the right to express, interpret, and benefit from a culture is stripped away, its spiritual core will gradually die. The introduction and display of art of ethnic minorities in China should return to a basic premise - the dignity and autonomy of cultural subjects is the starting point of all dissemination.

Only by allowing Miao silversmiths, Dai weavers, and Yi painters to become the "spokespersons" of their own culture, rather than being "romanticized" or "museumized" by viewing, can we avoid "protective destruction" and let the art and times of ethnic minorities truly realize "the beauty of each and the beauty of the beauty".

For example, the Ainu song and dance performances were once simplified as "exotic customs" in Japan, and the colonial history and political demands behind them were obscured. When introducing minority art, China should be wary of simplifying it as mere decorative symbols but should respect its cultural sovereignty and right of interpretation. Indigenous culture may be quite different from Chinese Han culture. Teachers may have a one-sided or wrong understanding of indigenous art due to their cultural background and insufficient knowledge reserves, and convey inaccurate information in teaching, leading to student misunderstanding. Therefore, in teaching, we should pay attention to cultural respect and ethical reflection and avoid simplifying indigenous arts as being "exotic customs" or "folk supplements".

#### *4.3.2. Adaptability of the education system*

The Western-centric art education system has long ignored the value of non-mainstream culture, and this problem also exists in Chinese art education. For example, the "functional aesthetics" in indigenous art (such as the healing meaning of Hopi pottery) conflicts with the Western concept of "art for art's sake". China needs to reconstruct curriculum evaluation standards to avoid downgrading traditional art and seeing it as merely "folk supplements". Traditional Chinese art teaching methods may not be suitable for teaching indigenous art. Teachers need to explore innovation and find ways that students can understand and accept. [14]. for example, in practical teaching, it is necessary to consider the differences in students' cultural background and skills base, and help students understand the cultural connotation and social function of indigenous art through diversified teaching methods.

#### *4.3.3. Intergenerational inheritance and innovation balance*

The inheritance of indigenous art faces the dual crisis of "language rupture" and "loss of skills", which also exists in China's ethnic minority areas. For example, Taiwan's ethnic minority art education faces the dual crisis of "language rupture" and "loss of skills". China's ethnic minority areas need to resolve the contradiction between traditional crafts and modern aesthetics. For example, the digital preservation of Naxi Dongba paintings has expanded the scope of dissemination, but it may also weaken its ritual connotation. Indigenous art is not only an echo of the past, but also a

compass for the future. Its cultural value lies in awakening human respect for diverse civilizations, while its educational significance lies in rebuilding the harmonious relationship between people and land, and tradition and modernity, through artistic practice. Chinese art education already has its own system and curriculum standards. Integrating indigenous art requires reasonable content arrangement so that it can be organically integrated with existing courses without increasing the burden on students. This places higher demands on curriculum design and teachers' teaching ability. For example, teachers need to have cross-cultural teaching ability, be able to combine indigenous art with traditional Chinese culture, and design teaching content that meets students' cognitive level.

### **5. Application and inspiration for the integration of indigenous arts into the Chinese education system**

In China, multicultural education has become an important part of the national strategy, and the integration of indigenous art, as an art form with unique cultural connotations and ecological wisdom, not only enriches the content of aesthetic education, but also injects new vitality into different types of educational institutions. Through the institutionalized carrier of "educational institutions", indigenous art is elevated from a marginal "cultural embellishment" to an organic part of cultural governance at the national level, echoing the policy statement that "the culture of all ethnic groups is an important foundation of Chinese culture". The essence of binding the application prospects of indigenous art to "different educational institutions" is to integrate them into the institutionalized education system, rather than staying in scattered cultural displays - for example, at the basic education stage (primary and secondary schools): through school-based curricula and intangible cultural heritage workshops, Miao embroidery and Dong songs are integrated into art and music classes, so as to cultivate young people's sense of cultural identity. Higher education (universities): "Anthropology of indigenous Art" in art schools and compulsory modules in "Multicultural Education" in teacher training colleges to provide theoretical tools for future teachers.

Social and educational institutions (art galleries, museums): Through immersive exhibitions (such as the Qiang watchtower building model, community oral history), parent-child workshops, indigenous art is transformed into cultural capital shared by all people.

First of all, in higher education institutions, the introduction of indigenous art can help promote interdisciplinary research and innovative education. As an important base for knowledge innovation and cultural inheritance, colleges and universities can learn from foreign experience and use indigenous art as a case study for thematic seminars, field trips, and multimedia interactive teaching, so as to promote students' understanding of and reflection on the relationship between traditional culture and modern art.

For example, fine arts colleges, cultural research centers, and interdisciplinary project teams can organize thematic exhibitions, workshops, and international symposiums on indigenous art to stimulate students' innovative thinking and critical awareness, thereby cultivating artistic talents with a global perspective.

Secondly, arts education at primary and secondary levels also has unique potential. Currently, primary and secondary school art education programs focus more on basic techniques and traditional cultural heritage but tend to be homogenized in terms of curriculum content. Incorporating indigenous art elements into primary and secondary school curricula can not only broaden students' aesthetic experience but also cul-

tivate their tolerance of multiculturalism and sense of social responsibility. For example, the curriculum can design “cross-cultural art experience” activities, through the introduction of indigenous totems, dances and handicrafts, combined with hands-on practice, so that students can experience cultural diversity in the experience. In addition, with the help of digital platforms and virtual reality technology, schools can build online teaching resource libraries, so that schools in remote areas can also have access to high-quality indigenous art teaching content, narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas in aesthetic education and promoting educational equity.

Third, vocational colleges and adult education institutions can also benefit from indigenous art. For students engaged in traditional crafts, design and cultural and creative industries, the unique symbols and ecological aesthetics contained in indigenous art can be an important source of creative inspiration. Vocational training institutions can offer specialized workshops or short-term courses on indigenous arts, not only to help students master traditional skills, but also to develop their cross-border integration skills and facilitate the interface between cultural industries and the modern market. In the field of adult education, introducing indigenous art into community education and lifelong learning programs, on the other hand, can help raise the public's cultural identity and ecological awareness, and enhance the overall cultural soft power of society.

## **6. Background and inspiration for the integration of indigenous arts into the global education system**

In the era of globalization, multicultural intermingling and cross-cultural dialogue have become an important direction in educational reform. As an important representative of non-Western culture, the educational value and social significance of indigenous art has become increasingly prominent internationally.

First, in western countries, with the popularization of post-colonial theory and the concept of cultural diversity, more and more colleges and universities and basic education institutions have begun to pay attention to the educational role of non-mainstream culture. Introducing indigenous art into the curriculum not only corrects the Western-centered bias that exists in traditional aesthetic education but also provides students with the vision to think about issues from multiple perspectives. For example, in countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia, some schools have taken indigenous art as an important part of cultural identity and historical memory and have realized the deep integration of art and society through curricular reforms and community involvement activities, thereby stimulating students' creativity and critical thinking.

Secondly, in other Asian countries, such as India and Southeast Asian countries, there are equally rich indigenous cultural resources in history. Through the study and introduction of indigenous art, the education system can not only pass on the local culture but also form a unique advantage in the global competition for education. Through international cooperation, teacher exchanges and transnational seminars, countries can jointly explore how to utilize indigenous arts to promote multicultural education and sustainable development. In this way, educational institutions in different countries can learn from each other's successful experiences, and at the same time promote theoretical innovation and practical development of cultural diversity education on a global scale.

In addition, the development of information technology provides new opportunities for global indigenous arts education. Modern technological means such as digital plat-



forms, virtual reality and big data analysis have made the dissemination and teaching of indigenous art break through geographical restrictions. Educational institutions around the world can build shared online courses, virtual exhibitions and interactive learning platforms, which not only facilitates students in learning about multiculturalism across time and space but also provides teachers with real-time feedback and personalized teaching support. Through such a mode of international cooperation, indigenous art will no longer be limited to specific regions but will become an important bridge to promote global cultural exchange and social harmony.

In conclusion, the potential effects of integrating indigenous art into the education system go far beyond the traditional realm of aesthetic education. It not only brings new teaching resources and methods to different levels and types of educational institutions in China, it also provides valuable insights for global education reform. Whether in higher education, primary and secondary schools, vocational training or adult continuing education, the introduction of indigenous art can help cultivate new-age talents with cross-cultural sensitivity, ecological and ethical awareness, and creative ability. By deepening international exchanges and cooperation, countries can work together to promote the development of multicultural education, realize knowledge sharing and cultural symbiosis, and thus promote the sustainable development and cultural inheritance of the global society.

## **7. Path exploration: theoretical construction and practical strategies**

### ***7.1. Construction of localized theoretical framework***

A curriculum which involves integrating indigenous art practice into Chinese Art Education requires starting from cultural respect, ecological aesthetic education, community participation, and interdisciplinary integration to construct a localized theoretical framework.

First, starting from the "empowerment theory", combining Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy with the indigenous "learning spirit" theory, we need to develop a "participation-symbiosis" aesthetic education model. Indigenous art practice emphasizes the unity of body, mind, and spirit, and emotional spirit, which is consistent with the comprehensive goal of aesthetic education. At the same time, indigenous art is closely related to the natural environment, emphasizing the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, focusing on collectivism and community participation, and highlighting the social function of art.

Secondly, by combining China's local cultural resources, indigenous art practice is combined with Chinese traditional culture (such as calligraphy, Chinese painting, folk intangible cultural heritage, etc.) to form unique art education content. For example, drawing on the idea of "harmony between man and nature" in Chinese traditional culture, and combining it with the indigenous view of nature, one can construct an ecological aesthetic education theory. Finally, through interdisciplinary theoretical support, including field investigations and cultural studies, we can deeply understand the cultural connotation and social function of indigenous art. Combined with Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy, we emphasize the criticality and liberation of art education, while paying attention to the role of art practice in the development of individual body, mind and spirit.

### **7.2. Interdisciplinary curriculum design**

To design an interdisciplinary curriculum, we can borrow from the model of the Izumo Tsugaru Art Festival in Japan, which combines artistic creation with ecological education and anthropological research. For example, in the Hani Rice Terraces area of Yunnan Province, a comprehensive curriculum on the theme of "rice culture" could be developed, incorporating multiple multimedia practices such as painting, photography, and community oral histories. We could divide local art practices into multiple modules (such as traditional crafts, natural arts, community arts, etc.), gradually integrate them into the art education curriculum, and design interdisciplinary art education content with the themes of "Man and Nature", "Cultural Inheritance" and "Social Participation".

First, through field investigations, art workshops, nature observations and other activities, learners should be allowed to experience indigenous art practice in person and be encouraged to work with community members and artists to complete art projects.

Secondly, indigenous artists and cultural inheritors should be invited to participate in course design and teaching, collect and organize documents, images and physical materials of indigenous art to provide support for teaching. At the same time, it is important to promote the exchange and integration of indigenous art and local culture through art festivals, exhibitions, seminars and other forms. Finally, in terms of evaluation, attention must be given to learners' artistic skills, in addition to evaluating their cultural understanding, ecological awareness and social responsibility, and measuring the social impact and cultural inheritance effect of artistic practice through the participation and feedback of community members.

### **7.3. Ethical collaboration mechanism**

Establishing a tripartite cooperation platform for indigenous artists, educational institutions and local communities is an important guarantee to ensure that indigenous art is integrated into art education. For example, the cooperation project between NYU Shanghai and the Ainu Music Preservation Society has achieved two-way empowerment of cultural communication and academic research through workshops and documentary recordings. Before the start of cooperation, a cultural agreement needs to be signed to clarify the scope of use, dissemination methods and benefit distribution of indigenous art, to ensure that indigenous artists and local communities fully understand the content and goals of the cooperation and obtain their explicit consent. At the same time, a library of indigenous art documents, images and physical objects needs to be established to support teaching and research, and to provide training for indigenous artists and local community members to enhance their ability to participate in cooperation.

The economic benefits of artistic practice will be clearly distributed through the agreement to ensure that indigenous artists and local communities receive reasonable returns. Finally, feedback from all parties on the effectiveness of cooperation will be collected through questionnaires, seminars, etc., and cooperation strategies will be adjusted in a timely manner. Evaluation criteria will be formulated to measure the cultural inheritance effect, social influence and educational results of the cooperation mechanism.

## 8. Conclusion

Global experience shows that the integration of indigenous art is not only an expansion of course content, but also an innovation of the educational paradigm - it requires breaking the shackles of Western-centrism and reconstructing the Chinese art education system with the goal of multicultural symbiosis. In this process, if China can balance the relationship between tradition and modernity, local and global, and combine indigenous art with the Chinese philosophy of "harmony between man and nature", it is expected to contribute a unique ecological aesthetic education program to the world and cultivate a new generation of artists with cultural awareness and global vision. Ultimately, the educational practice of indigenous art will go beyond the scope of cultural preservation and become a catalyst for promoting social inclusion, ecological sustainability and dialogue with human civilization.

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## Summary

Global experience shows that the integration of indigenous art is not only an expansion of course content, but also an innovation of the educational paradigm - it requires breaking the shackles of Western-centrism and reconstructing the Chinese art education system with the goal of multicultural symbiosis. In this process, if China can balance the relationship between tradition and modernity, local and global, and combine indigenous art with the Chinese philosophy of "harmony between man and nature", it is expected to contribute a unique ecological aesthetic education program to the world and cultivate a new generation of artists with cultural awareness and global vision. Ultimately, the educational practice of indigenous art will go beyond the scope of cultural preservation and become a catalyst for promoting social inclusion, ecological sustainability and dialogue with human civilization.

## Riassunto

L'esperienza globale dimostra che l'integrazione dell'arte aborigena non è solo un'espansione dei contenuti dei corsi, ma anche un'innovazione del paradigma educativo: richiede di rompere le catene del centrismo occidentale e di ricostruire il sistema di educazione artistica cinese con l'obiettivo della simbiosi multiculturale. In que-



sto processo, se la Cina riuscirà a bilanciare il rapporto tra tradizione e modernità, locale e globale, e a combinare l'arte aborigena con la filosofia cinese dell'"armonia tra uomo e natura", si prevede che contribuirà a un programma di educazione estetica ecologica unico al mondo e a coltivare una nuova generazione di artisti con consapevolezza culturale e visione globale. In definitiva, la pratica educativa dell'arte aborigena andrà oltre l'ambito della conservazione culturale e diventerà un catalizzatore per promuovere l'inclusione sociale, la sostenibilità ecologica e il dialogo con la civiltà umana.